

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 are pending and under consideration, and Claims 10–19 are withdrawn from consideration pursuant to a prior election restriction.

In the Office Action, Claims 1-9 are rejected.

With this Amendment, Claim 1 is amended, and Claim 6 is cancelled.

Accordingly, Claims 1-5, and 7-9 are now at issue.

I. 35 U.S.C. § 102 Anticipation Rejection of Claims

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5 and 7-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Ghezzo et al. (“Ghezzo”) (US 5,367,584).

Claim 6 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

As such, Claim 1 has been amended by incorporating the substantive limitations of Claim 6. Thus, independent Claim 1 is allowable. Claims 2–5, and 7–9, which are either directly or indirectly dependent on Claim 1, are also allowable for at least the same reasons.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that these claim rejections pursuant to 35 USC 102(b) be withdrawn.

II. 35 U.S.C. § 103 Obviousness Rejection of Claims

Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ghezzo in view of Berger et al. (“Berger”) (US 2003/0223675 A1).

As stated above, independent Claim 1 is allowable over Ghezzo. Thus, Claim 1 is allowable over Ghezzo in view of Berger, as well as dependent Claim 3.

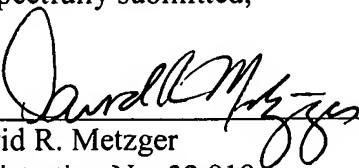
Accordingly, Applicant respectfully request that the claim rejection pursuant to 35 USC 103(a) be withdrawn.

III. Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant submits that Claims 1-5, and 7-9 are clearly allowable over the cited prior art, and respectfully requests early and favorable notification to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,

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